

DATE: April 28, 1969

TO : Courtney Jones, Joshua Lederberg, William Miller, Jobst von der Groeben

FROM : L. J. Schneiderman, M.D.

SUBJECT: Future Development of Computer Applications at Stanford Medical School

Gentlemen:

On April 24 we held a preliminary discussion regarding the importance of maintaining some overview of the future development of computer applications at Stanford Medical School. Since we all agreed on the need for this, I thought that in lieu of minutes to this meeting I would prod you with some suggestions which arise out of this discussion and many others.

1. As you know, we already have a medical school computer committee, The Clinical Computer Applications Committee. When this committee was first organized several years ago and chaired by Pete Rosenbaum, its main purpose was to look into the possible development of a medically oriented computer group at Stanford Medical School. Most of the effort was directed towards exploring programs throughout the country and looking over leading figures in the field of medical computing (Octo Barnett, Lee Lusted, John Seed, etc.). When interest in this approach declined, the CCAC became primarily a discussion group designed to maintain communications among the various researchers here at the Medical Center using computers. That this educational function has not been useless is attested by the rapidly enlarging list of individuals requesting to be put on the mailing list for meetings. However, I am quite frank to admit that under my chairmanship the CCAC has not served as an active force in guiding the Dean in possible future development plans. I have not had the Committee assume this role for a variety of reasons. However, I now feel it is the logical group to serve this role, at least until more ideal arrangements are made.
2. We also already have a representative to the Provost's Computer Committee in the person of Sandy Mesel. However, this office, too, has not been used to best advantage in that there has been relatively little flow of information back and forth between the campus policy makers and computer users at the Medical Center.
3. Among the many decisions facing the Dean with regard to the future development of computer applications at the Medical Center, some are long-range (allocation of money, space, and personnel devoted to computer-related activities in the expanding Medical Center and new hospital building) and some are rather immediate (the forthcoming revision in administrative procedures in the hospital and the proposed plans for relaying clinical laboratory data to remote terminals). In addition, investigators using the ACME system and independent computers are engaged in a wide range of activities with a variety of needs and goals. The Dean needs advice right now on these matters from someone or some group.
4. It is clearly important then that the Dean appoint as soon as possible an assistant on his staff who is responsible for advising on all computer-

related developments at the Medical Center. In general such a man should be an M.D., full-time member of the faculty, whose research is computer-related, and whose knowledge, experience, and imagination would enable him to advise the Dean on matters which will form a very vital part of the Medical Center of the future. Almost certainly the ideal man for such a post would be difficult, if not impossible, to find.

5. Until such a man is found, I suggest that the CCAC expand its activities so that it includes:
  - a. regular meetings for discussion of research with the involvement of as many members of the community who wish to participate, and
  - b. a working advisory group to the Dean. This latter group should meet often enough to exchange information and develop proposals for future computer development plans for the Medical Center covering ACME, hospital administration, and independent computer users.
6. The CCAC Committee advising the Dean should constitute, I believe, Courtney Jones, Joshua Lederberg, William Miller, Jobst von der Groeben, Emmanuel Mesel, Gio Wiederhold, Elliott Levinthal, Vic Barber, L. J. Schneiderman, and one or two more at the very most. Since the makeup and balance of such a committee is important, I ask you for your recommendations.
7. I think we should be considering possible candidates for the post of Assistant to the Dean in charge of Medical Center Computer Development, and we should urge the Dean to make provision for appropriate administrative support in terms of funds, space, and secretarial help for his activities. We should also try to define his role precisely in relationship to ACME, to the various investigators in the Medical Center with major computer projects, with extracurricular projects such as the Regional Medical Center program, and with the other campus computer organizations.
8. <sup>Until</sup> ~~Whether or not~~ we have found the right man for this job, we should be ready to advise the Dean on his appointment of a chairman of the CCAC-Provost's Computer Committee representative for the next academic year.
9. I suggest that Sandy Mesel and I remain in our present positions until the end of this academic year, but that a single individual next year serve as both chairman of the CCAC and Medical Center representative to the Provost's Computer Committee.
10. In summary, I hope these proposals seem reasonable to you and form an acceptable basis for beginning to organize this important area of activity at the Stanford Medical Center. Please communicate your thoughts to me so that we can convey our recommendations to the Dean as soon as possible.

cc: Vic Barber  
Elliott Levinthal  
Emmanuel Mesel  
Gio Wiederhold